LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A multipurpose packing machine for producing rigid packets of cigarettes and comprising:

an input portion ~~(2)~~, which comprises at least a first packing module ~~(26)~~ for forming groups ~~(5)~~ of cigarettes, for wrapping sheets of packing material ~~(11)~~ about the groups ~~(5)~~ of cigarettes to form packed groups ~~(13)~~ of cigarettes, and for wrapping at least inner blanks ~~(28)~~ about the packed groups ~~(13)~~ of cigarettes to form a succession of first packages ~~(31)~~ about the packed groups ~~(13)~~ of cigarettes and thus to produce a succession of first packets ~~(30)~~ of cigarettes; and

an output portion ~~(3); characterized in that the output portion (3) comprises~~ comprising at least a second packing module ~~(33; 46; 53; 62; 70)~~ similar to the first packing module ~~(26)~~ and for wrapping outer blanks ~~(34; 48; 56; 63; 71)~~ about the first packages ~~(31)~~ to form a succession of second packets ~~(35; 49; 57)~~ of cigarettes, each having a second package ~~(37; 50; 58)~~ housing at least one respective first packet ~~(30)~~ of cigarettes;

wherein in the output portion ~~(3)~~ each outer blank ~~(34; 48; 56; 63; 71)~~ is connected mechanically to the inner blank ~~(28)~~ so ~~as~~ that the second package ~~(37; 50; 58)~~ is inseparable from the first packet ~~(30)~~ of cigarettes;

wherein said first and said second packing module each comprise a respective input wheel and a respective output wheel having a first and a second axis respectively;

the input wheel and the output wheel rotating in steps about the respective first and second axis;

and the machine comprising a number of feed lines for respective blanks; the first packing module comprising a first transfer station connecting the respective input wheel to the respective output wheel, and a first said feed line for feeding a succession of first said blanks at least partly defining respective first packages.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 2, wherein, in each said first and second packing module ~~(26, 33; 26, 46; 26, 53; 26, 62; 26, 70)~~, said first and second axis ~~(20, 27; 40, 41)~~ are crosswise to each other.

4. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 2, wherein, in each of said first and second packing module ~~(26, 33; 26, 46; 26, 53; 26, 62; 26, 70)~~, the first axis ~~(20; 40)~~ is a vertical axis, and the second axis ~~(27; 41)~~ is a horizontal axis.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 1 ~~5~~, wherein the first packing module ~~(26)~~ comprises a second said feed line ~~(29)~~ for feeding a succession of second said blanks ~~(28)~~, each at least partly defining a ~~relative said~~ respective first package ~~(31)~~; the second feed line ~~(29)~~ feeding the second blanks ~~(28)~~ between the input wheel ~~(19)~~ and the output wheel ~~(23)~~ of the first packing module ~~(26)~~, at the first transfer station ~~(24)~~.

7. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 1 ~~5~~, wherein the second packing module ~~(33; 46; 53; 62; 70)~~ comprises a second transfer station ~~(42; 42a, 51; 64)~~ connecting the ~~relative~~ respective input wheel ~~(38)~~ to the ~~relative~~ respective output wheel ~~(39)~~, and for transferring said first packets ~~(30)~~ from the input wheel ~~(38)~~ to the output wheel ~~(39)~~; and a third said feed line ~~(43; 52; 61; 65; 72)~~ for feeding a succession of third said blanks ~~(34; 48; 56; 63; 71)~~, each at least partly defining a ~~relative~~ respective ~~said~~ second package ~~(37; 50; 58)~~; the third feed line ~~(43; 52; 61; 65; 72)~~ feeding the third blanks ~~(34; 48; 56; 63; 71)~~ between the input wheel ~~(38)~~ and the output wheel ~~(39)~~ of the second packing module ~~(33; 46; 53; 62; 70)~~, at the second transfer station ~~(42; 42a; 51; 64)~~.

8. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said second transfer station ~~(42; 42a; 64)~~ is a station for successively transferring said first packets ~~(30)~~ and the ~~relative~~ respective third blanks ~~(34; 56; 63; 71)~~ to the output wheel ~~(23; 39)~~ of the second packing module ~~(33; 53; 62; 70)~~ to form a succession of said second packets ~~(35; 57)~~, each having a respective second package ~~(37; 58)~~ housing a respective first packet ~~(30)~~.

9. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said second transfer station ~~(51)~~ is a station for accumulating said first packets ~~(30)~~ into first groups ~~(47)~~, and for transferring said first groups ~~(47)~~ and the ~~relative~~ respective third blanks ~~(48)~~ to the output wheel ~~(39)~~ of the second packing module ~~(46)~~ to form a succession of said second packets ~~(49)~~, each having a respective second package ~~(50)~~ housing a respective first group ~~(47)~~.

10. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the second packing module ~~(62)~~ comprises, between the first transfer station ~~(32)~~ and the second transfer station ~~(64)~~, an accumulating station ~~(51a; 51b)~~ for combining with a first packet ~~(30)~~, advanced by the input wheel ~~(38)~~, at least one further first packet ~~(30)~~ previously unloaded off the input wheel ~~(38)~~ at said accumulating station ~~(51a; 51b)~~, and for forming a ~~relative~~ respective first group ~~(47; 47a)~~ of first packets ~~(30)~~.

11. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said second packing module ~~(53)~~ comprises a further feed line ~~(60)~~ connected to the input wheel ~~(38)~~ at a second input station ~~(59)~~ located upstream from the second transfer station ~~(42)~~; the further feed line ~~(60)~~ supplying the input wheel (38) with a succession of objects ~~(54)~~, and combining each object ~~(54)~~, at the second input station ~~(59)~~, with a ~~relative~~ respective first packet ~~(30)~~ to form a ~~relative~~ respective second group ~~(55)~~; and said second transfer station ~~(42)~~ being a station for successively transferring said second groups ~~(55)~~ and the ~~relative~~ respective third blanks ~~(56)~~ to the output wheel ~~(39)~~ of the second packing module ~~(53)~~ to form a succession of said second packets ~~(57)~~, each having a respective second package ~~(58)~~ housing a respective second group ~~(55)~~.

12. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 11, wherein each said object ~~(54)~~ is a packet similar or identical to the ~~relative~~ respective first packet ~~(30)~~.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claims 1 ~~5~~, wherein said second packing module ~~(33; 46; 53; 62; 70)~~ comprises an auxiliary output wheel ~~(45)~~ located downstream from the ~~relative~~ respective output wheel ~~(39)~~; the auxiliary output wheel ~~(45)~~ being a wheel for turning the second packets ~~(35; 49; 57)~~ over through 180°.

15. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the second packing module ~~(33; 46; 53; 62; 70)~~ comprises a fourth feed line ~~(66)~~ for a succession of fourth blanks ~~(67)~~; the fourth feed line ~~(66)~~ feeding the fourth blanks ~~(67)~~ between the output wheel ~~(39)~~ and the auxiliary output wheel ~~(45)~~ of the second packing module ~~(33; 46; 53; 62; 70)~~ to pack the second packets ~~(35; 49; 57)~~.

16. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claims 7, and comprising at least two said second packing modules ~~(33; 46; 53; 62; 70)~~ in series; each said second packing module ~~(33; 46; 53; 62; 70)~~ comprising a respective third feed line ~~(43; 52; 61; 65; 72)~~ for a respective succession of said third blanks ~~(34; 48; 56; 63; 71)~~.

17. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claims 7, wherein the second feed line ~~(29)~~ feeds the second blanks ~~(28)~~ to the first transfer station ~~(24)~~ in a first direction ~~(68)~~, and the third feed line ~~(43; 52; 61; 65)~~ feeds the ~~relative~~ respective third blanks ~~(34; 48; 56; 63)~~ to the ~~relative~~ respective second transfer station ~~(42; 42a; 51; 64)~~ in a second direction ~~(69)~~; said first and said second direction ~~(68, 69)~~ being crosswise to each other.

18. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 17, wherein said first direction ~~(68)~~ is parallel to the second axes ~~(27; 41)~~, and said second direction ~~(69)~~ is crosswise to the second axes ~~(27; 41)~~.

19. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claims 1 ~~5,~~ wherein the input wheel ~~(38) of~~ the second packing module ~~(33; 46; 53; 62)~~ has an outer periphery designed to support the ~~relative~~ respective packed groups ~~(13)~~ positioned flat and with their respective longitudinal axes substantially tangent to the outer periphery and crosswise to the ~~relative~~ respective first axis ~~(40)~~.

20. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 19, wherein the output wheel ~~(39)~~ of the second packing module ~~(33; 46; 53)~~ has an outer periphery designed to support the ~~relative~~ respective packed groups ~~(13)~~ positioned on edge and with their respective longitudinal axes parallel to the ~~relative~~ respective second axis ~~(41)~~.

21. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 20, wherein the output wheel ~~(39)~~ of the second packing module ~~(62; 70)~~ has an outer periphery designed to support the ~~relative~~ respective packed groups ~~(13)~~ positioned flat and with their respective longitudinal axes parallel to the ~~relative~~ respective second axis ~~(41)~~.

22. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claims 7, wherein the second feed line ~~(29)~~ feeds the second blanks ~~(28)~~ to the first transfer station ~~(24)~~ in a first direction ~~(68)~~, and the third feed line ~~(72)~~ feeds the ~~relative~~ respective third blanks (71) to the ~~relative~~ respective second transfer ~~station~~ (42a) in a second direction ~~(73)~~; said first and said second direction ~~(68, 73)~~ being parallel to each other and to the second axes ~~(27, 41)~~.

23. (Currently Amended) A machine as claimed in Claim 22, wherein, in each packing module ~~(26, 70)~~, the input wheel ~~(19; 38a)~~ has an outer periphery designed to support the ~~relative~~ respective packed groups ~~(13)~~ positioned on edge and with their respective longitudinal axes substantially tangent to the outer periphery of the input wheel ~~(19; 38a)~~ and crosswise to the ~~relative~~ respective first axis ~~(20; 40a)~~; and the output wheel ~~(23; 39)~~ has an outer periphery designed to support the ~~relative~~ respective packed groups ~~(13)~~ positioned flat and with their respective longitudinal axes parallel to the ~~relative~~ respective second axis ~~(27; 41a)~~.

24. (New) A machine as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the first feed line is connected to the input wheel of the first packing module at a first input station located upstream from the first transfer station.